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THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE CHRIST

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The dogma of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, with its corollary of "infallibility" and "inerrancy," has so extensively leavened the popular mind as to become in some places a positive obstacle in the way of a truly scientific study of the Bible. Its habitual tendency is either to misconceive, to conceal, or to pervert the significance of the undeniable human element in the sacred writings. The leading churches of the Reformation maintained the doctrine of divinely secured human action by the monergistic operation of the Holy Spirit, and that doctrine held general and powerful ascendancy in the Protestant world until the beginning of the nineteenth century. And it is powerful still. Many who reject the necessitarian philosophy and metaphysics are so accustomed to formulas of expression which have their origin in the dogma of positively secured human conduct, that they unwittingly accept the notion of the inerrant infallibility of the entire biblical record.

A natural result of this widespread conception is the habit of speaking of the entire Bible as if every word of it had been miraculously dictated by the Spirit of God. Every sentence is assumed to be equivalent to a "thus saith the Lord." The older catechisms and compendiums of theology cite their proof-texts *ad libitum*, as if a saying of Eliphaz the Temanite, or a song of Asaph, or a proverb of King Lemuel which his mother taught him, were just as truly and as fully the word of the Lord as a specific commandment from the lips of Jesus Christ. "According to traditional theology," says Reuss, "prophets and apostles can have been nothing but the passive instruments of the revealing will, which for the secure fulfilment of its purposes is supposed to have neutralized and arrested, either temporarily or permanently, all intellectual action in the organs of its choice."¹

¹ *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age*, p. 17.

A further result of this dogma is a conspicuous lack of discrimination in speaking of the different portions of the Bible. The Old Testament is often tacitly assumed to possess in all its parts and for these Christian times as much divine authority in matters of faith and practice as any portion of the New Testament. And distinguished writers have even gone to the extreme of maintaining that the recorded falsehood of Abraham and Isaac, the assassination of Sisera by Jael, the barbarous execution of Agag by Samuel, and the vindictive psalms, were in fundamental agreement with the ethics of the Christian religion.

Still another result of this mistaken idea of the Scriptures is a habit, unfortunately too prevalent and conspicuous, of breathing out obloquy, not to say "threatening and slaughter," against anyone, no matter what his high moral character and standing, who points out the imperfect ethics of Old Testament saints; or who calls attention to the fact that nearly all the precepts, laws, statutes, and judgments of the Pentateuch are now obsolete and without obligatory force for the Christian conscience; or who alleges that "many of the Psalms are highly improper for the mouths of a Christian congregation,"² and that a large proportion of the Old Testament prophecies have immediate reference to peoples and social conditions long since passed away, and are profitable to us now only by way of inference and modified practical application. And all this is done in the face of the teachings of Jesus which made manifest the defects and limitations of the Old Testament two thousand years ago.

In view of the facts now mentioned, it becomes us to inquire: What was the real attitude of our Lord toward the Old Testament Scriptures? We must look for our answer to this question in the record of Jesus' sayings as we find them in the four gospels. We classify and arrange in the following pages all those passages which serve to show the spirit and the manner in which our Lord made use of the Scriptures, and we shall endeavor to ascertain the essential import of his language, and at the same time guard against unwarranted inferences and assertions.

1. We first make note of that important class of *biblical texts*

² These are the words of John Wesley, written in 1784 and printed in the Preface to his *Sunday Service for the Methodists in North America*.

which are of the nature of hallowed epigrams and *highly profitable for purposes of spiritual edification and comfort*. To this class belong the citations from Deuteronomy made by Jesus in his resisting the temptations of Satan, and the record (Matt. 4:1-11) furnishes an example and an illustration of what the saints of God in all ages have found a solace, an inspiration, and a source of strength in the hour of trial, namely, the appropriation of a holy commandment or promise, a motto or a proverb, adapted to the situation and embodying some noble rule of life. Our Lord's exclamation on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is another example of his use of an appropriate scripture to express his awful sense of abandonment. Such citations need no comment; they contain an utterance strikingly suitable for the moment, and very impressive. It matters not where such texts are found, or what their immediate context; the authorship and first application of them may or may not have a particular value; they carry in their sentiment and on their face a self-evidencing worth. Their all-sufficient authority is their own intrinsic excellence. Blessed is the man who is so filled with maxims of deep religious content that in the hour of temptation he can readily cite them for assurance and defense. Such practical use of the Scriptures accords with the statement of Paul that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

We may observe also, in this connection, how quickly our Lord discerned and rejected the error of literal and presumptuous interpretation of a scripture like Ps. 91:11, 12, which the devil himself quoted as an inducement for the Son of God to cast himself down from the temple. The entire psalm abounds in assurances of divine help to him who "abides under the shadow of the Almighty;" but he who presumes to take such poetic passages literally ought to learn something from this example of Jesus in explaining one scripture by the help of another. Jesus replied to Satan: "Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God." It may be that modern literalists, who boast of "taking the Bible just as it says," sometimes unwittingly entangle themselves in the wiles of the devil.

2. Another class of texts contains *allusions* made by Jesus to well-

known persons and events supposed to be familiar to every Jewish hearer. It is sufficient here to mention as examples the references to Noah and Lot in Matt. 24:27; Luke 17:28-29; to David entering the house of God and eating the showbread (Matt. 12:4); and to Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness (John 3:14). There is not the slightest necessity for maintaining that in such allusions the question of authorship or of historicity was for a moment thought of. The references were made solely for the purpose of illustration, and that purpose was served just the same whether the matters mentioned were or were not historically demonstrable. In the same manner one may, and often does, refer to characters and acts recorded in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in *Hamlet*, in *David Copperfield*, and in current histories of Greece, Rome, and England. Such allusions can prove nothing by themselves as to date, authorship, or literary character of the books cited. In the reference to Abel and Zachariah in Matt. 23:35 we may see a recognition of the beginning and end of the Jewish canon; for the Zachariah referred to seems to have been the one mentioned in 2 Chron. 24:21, "who was stoned with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of Jehovah." Chronicles is the last book of the Jewish Scriptures, as Genesis is the first, and so Abel's death recorded near the beginning of Genesis, and Zachariah's near the end of Chronicles, are naturally mentioned as the first and last examples of martyrdom in sacred story. Jesus thus appears to recognize the order of the Old Testament books as they were at that time arranged by the Jewish scribes and elders, but he expressed no opinion as to the correctness or incorrectness of the arrangement. The citation of Old Testament books by their current names, or the names of their supposed authors, is no necessary expression of critical judgment as to the real authorship of writings thus cited, for the same principle of reasoning would require us to maintain the genuineness of the apocryphal book of Enoch because of the citation from it found in the epistle of Jude.

3. During his whole life and ministry Jesus *showed a becoming respect for the rites of the Mosaic law.* He himself was "born under the law" (Gal. 4:4), and after having been circumcised he was formally presented at the temple with the appropriate offerings required by the law (Luke 2:21-24). He submitted to John's bap-

tism, declaring that thus it became him "to fulfil all righteousness." When he cleansed a leper, he bade him go to the priest and "offer the gift that Moses commanded" (Matt. 8:4). He admonished his disciples that "the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat," and their teachings were therefore to be duly observed. He even represented father Abraham as speaking to the rich man in Hades about "Moses and the prophets" (Luke 16:29). He enjoined upon those who asked him what they must do to inherit eternal life, to keep the commandments of the Decalogue; and he condensed them into the two great commandments of love (Matt. 19:16-19; Luke 10:26-28). These two commandments are found in Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18; but the superior wisdom of our Lord is seen in the discrimination which assigns to these two the substance of "the whole law and the prophets." The Lord's prayer is made up of petitions which had probably been uttered in substance and in separate parts a thousand times before, but only the wisdom of Jesus was sufficient to collect and combine them into one short universal prayer.

4. Jesus also declared on various occasions that *many scriptures of the Old Testament were to find fulfilment in him*. Some of his reported sayings imply a sort of divine necessity that the messianic prophecies "must be consummated." He would not call to his aid twelve legions of angels, for "how then should the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be" (Matt. 26:54). In the synagogue at Nazareth he read Isa. 61:1-3, and said: "Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." At the same time he made a significant reference to Elijah and the widow of Zarephath, and to Elisha and Naaman the Syrian. He taught the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that it behooved the Christ to suffer and to enter into his glory, "and beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:25-32). Again and again we find him citing the words of Isaiah as having new fulfilment in his time (Matt. 13:14-15; 15:8; 21:13; Mark 11:17). He cited Ps. 118:22, 23, "The stone which the builders rejected," etc., as having application to his own time and work (Matt. 21:42). He quoted Ps. 110:1, and put the Pharisees to confusion by asking them how the Christ could be

both Lord and son of David (Matt. 22:41-45). In Matt. 24:29-31 we observe how he appropriated the highly metaphorical language of various Old Testament prophets to portray his own future coming and the end of that age. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem seems to have been a designed procedure, symbolic in its suggestions of his entire ministry on earth, and fulfilling in a striking manner the prophecy of Zech. 9:9.

5. Another phase of Jesus' attitude toward Old Testament laws and customs appears in his *denunciation* of the Pharisees and the scribes for their *overmuch attention to outward formalities*, and their making the more important commandments of no effect by their traditions. He spoke in no mild terms against the undue importance they assigned to bathing the body, washing the hands, baptizing cups and pots and brazen vessels, and their disputing over meats and drinks. He charged them with nullifying the commandment to honor father and mother by their ostentatious gifts to the temple of what should rather have been devoted to the welfare of a needy parent (Mark 7:1-23). "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites," he cried; "for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith. . . . Ye cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full from extortion and excess." In many other like words of rebuke he exposed their efforts to appear outwardly righteous unto men, while inwardly they were "full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matt. 23:16-28).

In like manner he condemned their superficial ritualistic notions of sabbath observance. He pointed out to those sticklers for law that, according to their rigid rule, even the priests in the temples were continually profaning the sabbath in performing the required work of their office (Matt. 12:5). He cited the case of David "when he had need and was hungry," and declared that "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath; so that the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath day" (Mark 2:24-28). How futile, in the light of this view of all Old Testament law and its fulfilment in Christ, is the whole modern controversy of the sectarian literalists who insist on keeping a "seventh-day sabbath" rather than sanctifying the "first day of the week." The Jewish sabbath day, as it

was ordained and guarded by the Old Testament legislation, is of no more binding authority for the Christian conscience than the old sabbatic year, or the new moons, or the feast-days and fast-days of the Jewish people, or their laws and customs of meats and drinks (cf. Col. 2:16, 17). Like all the other commandments of the Decalogue, the sabbath law is transfigured into the loftier ideal of the believer's entrance into the peaceful rest of God, wherein every day is holy and every spot is holy ground. The believer who has entered into this rest (cf. Heb. 4:3), like the Christ himself, becomes "lord of the sabbath" and discerns most clearly that "the sabbath was made for man." His observance of one day in seven will be based, not on the mere pronouncement of an external commandment, but on the deeper conviction of the essential value of an institution which makes for the highest good of man. He must "do good on the sabbath day" (Matt. 12:12). In like manner every other commandment of the Decalogue may be shown to involve an intrinsic ethical principle which appeals to the universal moral sense of man. And our modern "sabbath" or "Sunday laws," if they bind the enlightened conscience, must needs establish their claim on a like deep principle of universal humanitarian obligation, not on the bare letter of an ancient law of Israel.

6. In this connection we should notice also those admonitions of Jesus which indicate *the greater responsibility*, and consequent greater exposure to condemning judgment, *of them that heard his words and saw his works*. "It shall be more tolerable," he declared, "for Tyre and Sidon and Sodom in the judgment than for Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum" (Matt. 11:20-24). "The men of Nineveh and the queen of Sheba shall rise up in the judgment and condemn the generation that witnessed the ministry of Jesus" (Matt. 12:38-45).

7. But that teaching of Jesus which calls for our more special study is his explicit showing of the defective elements of the law, his setting aside sundry positive enactments of the Mosaic legislation, and his declaration that *he came not to destroy but to fulfil the law and the prophets*. His fulfilling the law and the prophets, as contradistinguished from destroying them, has been strangely misunderstood. We shall find, in the light of Jesus' own teaching, that his

fulfilling the content and purport of the Old Testament involves the complete displacement of the statutes and rites of the old covenant as a norm of religious life in Christ. His saying that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished" (Matt. 5:18) does not mean or imply that the law in all its parts is to remain in force forever. On the contrary, the great Teacher made it very clear and positive that he himself is the end of the law; and his fulfilment, accomplishing, or consummation of the law and the prophets is a *making of all things new in the gospel of a new and better covenant*. Law and prophets are swallowed up and superseded by the gospel of the kingdom of heaven. The distinction between destroying and fulfilling is illustrated by the obvious impropriety of putting a piece of new undressed cloth upon an old garment, and of putting new wine into old wineskins. It is equally incongruous for an invited guest to be found fasting at the time of the wedding-feast when the bridegroom and his friends are expected to rejoice together (Matt. 9:14-17). And so we are taught that the gospel carries with it a new spirit and a new life. It is not a dispensation of partial reforms, with the omission or modification of a number of old customs, but a deep, radical, and permanent uplift from the bondage of the letter to a glorious freedom of the Spirit. Jesus came not to set aside an indefinite portion of the Old Testament regulations, and to institute a sort of eclectic system in which the old law and the prophets were, with a few exceptions, to remain as the authoritative guides of Christian life and thought. He came as the Mediator of a new and better covenant, enacted upon better promises (Heb. 8:6). He made the old things pass away in order that all things might become new (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17 and Rev. 21:5). The old is not destroyed; it remains as an invaluable object-lesson, showing how God did at sundry times and in divers ways reveal himself of old. But every jot and tittle of the former revelations have been taken up, as by a process of living growth, and incorporated by the power of a new and higher life into the gospel of our Lord. One of the "Thirty-nine Articles" of the English church declares that "the law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding,

no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral." We may even put it in stronger terms, and say that the entire law and prophets and psalms are fulfilled or perfected in the new covenant of Jesus Christ. Every jot and tittle of them all, possessed of any permanent religious value, have become part and parcel of the gospel system. This great *pleroma*, "the fulness of him who filleth all in all," gathers up into itself every essential element of the old covenant, and imparts to everything a higher and more heavenly aspect. No jot or tittle of the old law can therefore remain precisely what it was. The great Teacher issued no rule and set no example by which we are now to go through the Hebrew Scriptures, and presume to say of one text, This is fulfilled, and of another, That is not yet fulfilled; the law of tithing is yet obligatory on the Christian, but the prohibition of swine's flesh is now null and void. No such eclectic procedure can be made to work with self-consistency. There is no authoritative voice in church or state throughout the world, no general council, and no prophet or teacher, that can be accepted as an infallible guide in any such a separation and selection of ancient oracles fulfilled and unfulfilled. Alas! Has the great Teacher been so long time with us, and we yet fail to grasp his word? We strangely heed his testimony, and that of his apostles after him, if we refuse to see that the whole Old Testament revelation, not excepting one jot or tittle of the law and the prophets, is fulfilled by being fused into a new and better covenant, which is enacted upon broader and higher principles and better promises. Even the Ten Commandments, the richest kernel of the law, are exalted into new life and acquire depths of divine significance unknown to the ancient fathers. "Thou shalt do no murder" is now shown to condemn "everyone who is angry with his brother." The crime of adultery is committed whenever one "looketh on a woman to lust after her." The prohibition of blasphemy is superseded by the higher commandment, "Swear not at all." The sabbath laws are lifted far above the plane of a bare and barren statute that requires a man to suspend his usual work for some twelve or fifteen particular hours out of a specified twenty-four (which could never be the same for men living on opposite sides of the world), and they are fulfilled in a principle of Christly life

which grasps the deeper and more universal obligation of observing sabbath by doing good therein, and by so commanding all one's time that a suitable proportion of it shall be duly consecrated to the loving service of God and of our fellow-men. Thus may we, like our divine Master, become lord, not the slave, of the sabbath day. Other statutes and precepts of the ancient times become transformed and transfigured in their fulfilment in Christ. The old law of retaliation is consummated so as to be eclipsed and lost from view in presence of the heavenly love that turns the other cheek to him that smites, prays for the enemy and the persecutor, and seeks to "be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect."

8. Not only in such a heavenly fulfilling of the great ethical precepts of the law does the Lord Jesus open to us ideals of the new and higher Christian life, but also in other ways, and *in some instances by direct antagonism to the old Mosaic legislation, he reveals the superior standards of truth and righteousness in the kingdom of God.* Observe how explicitly he put aside the easy-going regulation of divorce which is written in Deut. 24:1-3, and there stands along with much more that is said to be "the words of the covenant which Jehovah commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab," but which, according to Jesus, Moses permitted because of the people's hardness of heart. He himself, on the contrary, declared strict monogamy to be God's law "from the beginning of the creation," when he made them male and female. According to the text of the gospel of Mark (10:2-11), Jesus prohibits all divorce. Any man or woman who puts away wife or husband and marries another is guilty of adultery. No exception or qualification is mentioned in this oldest record of the words of Jesus, and there is good reason to suspect that the exceptional clause now found in Matthew's gospel ("except for fornication," Matt. 5:32; 19:8) is an early interpolation, foisted into the text by some Jewish-Christian scribe who felt the teaching of Jesus at this point to be altogether too severe.

9. According to Christ's teaching, *the Old Testament prophets as well as the law, were inferior and defective in the light of the kingdom of heaven* and the new covenant of love. Jesus was quick to appreciate a saying like that of Hos. 6:6, "I desire goodness and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings," and he

quoted it in self-defense against the Pharisees (Matt. 9:13; 12:7). But he rebuked those disciples who wished, after the manner of Elijah (2 Kings 1:10), to bid fire come down from heaven and consume a Samaritan village that refused to receive him (Luke 9:55). The Jewish scribes taught that, according to Mal. 4:5, "Elijah must first come," and the "Second Adventists" of modern times insist on following the same method of literal exegesis; but Jesus showed a deeper penetration in pointing out to his disciples that Elijah had already come in the person and ministry of John the Baptist. He also showed them that John was the last of a long succession of prophetic voices that had spoken of the coming of the Christ of God. "All the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Matt. 11:13). But at the same time he admonished them and us that, while "among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist, yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." If, then, the greatest of the Old Testament prophets is less than the little ones in Christ's new kingdom, with what propriety can we, who have been thus enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and of the powers of the gospel age, go back for our authoritative guidance to a system that is superseded, finished, and fulfilled? Is it not possible for us, through a blinding bondage to the letter, to sell our heavenly birthright for an old patriarchal or Jewish mess of meat? Let us allow no veil upon our heart that will prevent our beholding, whensoever Moses is read, that the ministration once written and engraven on stones is finished and fulfilled, and has become permanently eclipsed in the Christly ministration of righteousness, which far excels in glory (cf. 2 Cor. 3:7-11).

10. In further illustration of the manner in which the "Mediator of the new covenant" maketh all things new, we notice a few examples of *his spiritual discernment in certain portions of the Old Testament*. The superficial Sadducees thought to confound him by their gross fleshly conception of the resurrection of the dead, and proposed the concrete example of a woman who, according to the levirate law, had married seven husbands. "Ye do err," said Jesus, "not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." And he cited Exod. 3:6, "I am the God of Abraham," etc., and made the profound, suggestive

comment: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." Such teaching, we are told, astonished the multitudes. But what was the peculiar element of his teaching that astonished? Was it not the spiritual insight that lifted their ideas above carnal things? The resurrection is attainment of angelic life, in conditions of being in which they "neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more" (Luke 20:35, 36). At another time, when the Jews spoke of their fathers eating manna in the wilderness, Jesus answered: "It was not Moses that gave you the bread out of heaven, but my Father that giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died" (John 6:32-49). When they boasted that Abraham was their father, he admonished them that Abraham did not go about seeking to kill a man that told the truth. He astonished them by saying: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day," And then he added to their confusion by his solemn declaration: "Before Abraham was born, I am" (John 8:40, 56-58). With what scathing exposure he condemned the narrow dogmatism that required circumcision on a sabbath day in order "that the law of Moses might not be broken," but was offended in him "because he made a man every whit whole on the sabbath" (John 7:19-24). Once, when they would have stoned him for the supposed blasphemy of calling God his Father, he cited the eighty-second psalm, in which magistrates who execute judgment are called "gods and sons of the Most High," and thereupon put to them the searching question: "If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and if, as ye assume,³ the scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God" (John 10:36). Here Jesus called the psalms "your law," and his answer to those Jews was strictly an *argumentum ad hominem*, not the utterance of any dogma

³ According to the majority of exegetes, the words "and the scripture cannot be broken" are not to be taken as a parenthesis, but rather to be construed as an additional clause depending on the "if" of the preceding sentence. Hence the words are not to be understood as a parenthetical expression of our Lord's opinion touching the inviolableness of the scripture, but are purely hypotheticalal in an argument which simply assumes current Jewish opinion as its premise.

of his own concerning the Scriptures. So also the great lesson, inculcated in the famous passage in John 5:39-47, is the moral impossibility of apprehending the deep spiritual significance of the Scriptures when one has not the love of God abiding in the heart. "Ye search the Scriptures," he says, "because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they that bear witness of me; and yet ye will not come to me that ye may have life." Here we read no command to search the Scriptures, as the common version has long erroneously implied; nor does Jesus himself affirm that the Scriptures contain eternal life, or that the Jews in thinking so were right or wrong. The passage is one of those characteristic sayings of our Lord which charge upon the superficial Jewish literalists a total failure to comprehend the real witness of the Old Testament to Christ. And he went on to say that their one accuser was that very Moses on whom they set their hope. "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" How must those Jews have been astonished at being told that they did not believe the writings of Moses? Had they not been brought up on Moses? From childhood they had heard him read every sabbath in the synagogue. And yet this presumptuous man of Nazareth tells them that if they had only believed Moses, they would also believe in him! They probably all believed that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. They found no trouble in accepting any recorded statement of the five books as veritable fact. They knew nothing of that modern criticism which detects the composite elements in those venerable writings, and discovers the different codes of law imbedded therein. And yet Jesus told them to their face that they did not believe Moses or his writings! Alas! It may be a very small and bootless thing to believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, but an unspeakably more important thing to be able to discern the real witness of these ancient books to Christ. Where can the literalist find the passage in which it is written that Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Jesus of Nazareth? Where is the passage in the Pentateuch in which it is clear that Moses wrote of Christ? Jesus did not say that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, but "he wrote of me." And not Moses only, but "all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken,

they also told of these days" (Acts 3:24). The law, the prophets, and the psalms all bear their witness to the Christ, but not in accordance with the literalist's notions of predictive prophecy. Whosoever insists that Moses must have written the books of Moses, and Samuel the books of Samuel, and whosoever goes through the Old Testament writings selecting here and there a text which seems to him to speak directly and specifically of Jesus Christ, and yet retains the veil of defunct Judaism upon his heart, so that he fails to see that every jot and tittle of the law have been fulfilled by a heavenly fusion into the richer content of the gospel of the new covenant, is still like the Jews of old whom Jesus charged with a culpable failure to believe either in Moses or in himself. Such a failure arises from want of spiritual discernment.

For a freedom from such bondage to the letter, and from such false conceptions of biblical inspiration as were held by the scribes and Pharisees of ancient and modern times, did Christ set us free. We should stand fast, therefore, in our liberty, and not be entangled again in such a yoke of bondage. Seeing that the whole law, the prophets, and the psalms have been fulfilled and consummated in the Christ, so that every element of permanent value is exalted into a higher life and power, and everything that was imperfect, defective, or temporary is displaced and superseded by a clearer revelation of God, we shall not henceforth be offended at perceiving how large a portion of the Old Testament has fallen into desuetude, and presents no proper moral standard for us to follow now. We should no longer apologize for the falsehood of Abraham, or the polygamy of the patriarchs and of David and Solomon. We need not be troubled over the anger and the shortcomings of Moses. We may still appreciate the poetry of Deborah's song, although she barbarously extols the murderous deed of Jael, and would probably have been as ready as the mother of Sisera to exult in the capture of a heathen damsel or two for every warrior in Israel. Cutting off the thumbs and toes of Adoni-bezek, hewing Agag into pieces before Jehovah, and hanging the seven sons of Saul for the pacification of Jehovah, need no more excuse for occurring in Israel than if the same things had occurred among the Philistines or the Moabites. The system of slavery which finds a sanction in the laws of Moses calls for no more vindication

from a Christian than does the law of retaliation—"hand for hand, foot for foot, eye for eye." The marriage and divorce laws of the Pentateuch are as foreign to the teaching of Jesus as are the sentiments of the vindictive psalms. The cruel separation of husbands and wives, as narrated in the last chapter of the book of Ezra, and the prohibition of all foreign marriages as written in Deut. 7:1-5, could not be tolerated in a Christian commonwealth today. The vengeful slaughter of over seventy-five thousand men, so gloatingly told in the ninth chapter of the book of Esther, should not be held up as a commendation of the womanly virtues of the favorite wife of Ahasuerus, who petitioned the king to continue the massacre for another day! Nor can we admire the spirit of Mordecai in ordaining the feast of Purim to perpetuate the memory of such a horrible retaliation. Such deeds of ancient barbarism, when justified by the notion that the Old Testament abides as an authoritative norm, become warrant and excuse for such a tragedy as the massacre of St. Bartholomew in Parisian history. The true disciple of the kingdom of heaven, gifted with the spirit of his Lord, perceives at once that all such deeds of vengeance are utterly out of place under the gospel. It is a sad blot on the history of the Puritan colonists of New England that they assumed the perpetual validity of the Old Testament commandment, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." And scores of American divines during the last century were too blind to see that the Jewish laws touching slavery are as inconsistent with Christian ethics as were their ancient customs of polygamy and their loose doctrine of divorce.

The plain fact is that the larger portion of the Old Testament treats of times and peoples so different, and so far away from our conditions both of thought and of life, that the messages of the Hebrew prophets can have at most only a modified application to us and to our times. The entire Levitical legislation, which comprises the larger part of the Pentateuch, can have no binding force upon the Christian church, having long ago waxed aged even unto vanishing away (Heb. 8:13). Nearly one-half the book of Job consists of the speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, who were sternly rebuked by Jehovah for not having spoken the thing that was right. The Song of Solomon and the books of Ecclesiastes and Esther have for

centuries furnished the material of doubtful disputations, and their right to a place in the canon has been persistently questioned. In view of these and many other facts of a similar character, we accept with great comfort the teaching of our Lord that every jot and tittle of the law and the prophets have been fulfilled. They have accomplished their end, and cease to be a norm of religious life to him whose life is hid with Christ in God. We reverence the old, but see it all transfigured by the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, which puts the new cloth into new garments and the new wine into new wine-skins. And in this deeper and broader sense we perceive that not only Moses, but also Joshua, and Samuel, and David, and Solomon wrote of the Christ that was to come.

We possess the same old Bible still, with all its treasures of law and prophecy and sacred song; with all its tedious story of transgressions, of backslidings, of murmurings against God, of idolatry and despicable crimes, of wars and exiles and death. We find in the books ascribed to Moses, David,¹⁷ and Isaiah innumerable oracles of God. We have lost nothing of value by the revelation of Jesus Christ, but rather we have all things made new and better. "Every scribe who has been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like a man that is a householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13:52). Such disciples only can set the teachings of the Bible in their true relations. All questions of style and authorship and date, of possible myth and legend and folklore, are promptly remanded to the department of literary, historical, and antiquarian research. That kind of research has its important place and value. But the disciple of the kingdom of God sees, through all the human forms of thought and composition, the precious central truth that our Father in heaven is never absent from his world. He reads the first chapter of Genesis with wonder and admiration, not having his mind distorted with the delusion that he is perusing a miraculously dictated and infallible treatise on astronomy, geology, and biology, which he must needs "reconcile" with existing physical facts or else imperil the foundations of his religion; but rather does he feel his soul enraptured in the presence of a great Hebrew theist, who ages ago was gifted to see the potent agency of God back of all phenomena. He beholds man himself made in the

image and after the likeness of God. Whether this marvelous creation were produced by an instantaneous act of power, or through ages of evolution, the facts remain the same. He finds the story of primeval innocence, of temptation, of guilt and shame and sorrow, true to the profoundest experiences of human life. He reads that both Enoch and Noah walked with God; the one was taken and the other left. The one is a typical witness of immortal life with God; the other, a typical preacher of righteousness in a world of sin. In Abraham he sees how a stranger and pilgrim on the earth may become the friend of God, and inherit the heavenly promises. With Jacob he may dream at Bethel, and at Peniel come face to face with God. But he may see more than any ancient patriarch saw; for with the New Testament disciple Nathaniel, "an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile," he may see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending, not upon a visional ladder, but upon the Son of man. Nay, more: he beholds Jehovah himself coming down out of heaven, taking the form of a servant, manifesting the glory of God, and so dwelling and communing with man as to fill him with all the fulness of God.

And thus might one go on through all that is written in the law and the prophets, and find in them the lessons of eternal life; but those lessons and that life become real only as we are able to see them all complete in Christ. We need not fear that Moses and the prophets will be destroyed because eclipsed by the surpassing glory of the Sun of righteousness which has arisen with the coming of the Christ. The divine legation of Moses and the prophesying of Elijah become transfigured in our souls as we behold them together in glory in the holy mount talking with Jesus about the death which he accomplished in Jerusalem. Nor shall we be troubled about the death of Moses, or about his lonely grave in the land of Moab. Michael and the devil may dispute about his body and about his writings all they will; we prefer to behold both lawgiver and prophet in a new and heavenly light. But the glory on Moses' face and the splendor of Elijah grow dim before the radiance of the face of Jesus Christ. Jewish-minded Peter, when he saw the ancient worthies about to pass away (Luke 9:33), was troubled, and proposed to build three tabernacles to keep the Christ and Moses and Elijah on the same equality; but a

cloud overshadowed him while he spoke, and "a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen, *hear ye him* (rather than Moses and the prophets). And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone." Let us not misapprehend the far-reaching significance of that heavenly vision. Moses and Elijah remain in the picture in a glory of their own, as old schoolmasters of blessed memory who led the way to Christ. But we should be like the three disciples who, after they heard the voice out of the cloud, "suddenly looking round about, saw no one any more save Jesus only with themselves" (Mark 9:8). He remains with us in all his glory still. He is the end of the law and the fulfilment of prophecy for the Christian ages. He is now sitting on his heavenly throne, and he saith: "Behold, I make all things new."